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Message Text

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43
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 IO-12

AID-20 RSR-01 EUR-25 /139 W
---------- 115764
R 050950 Z MAY 73
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1226
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANNE
AMCONSUL BIEN HOA
AMCONSUL CAN THO
AMCONSUL DANANG
AMCONSUL NHA TRANG
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 7860

E. O. 11652 : GDS
TAGS: PINT, MILI, VS
SUBJECT: PRESS AND RADIO TREATMENT OF BIG MINH STATEMENT:
GVN & MINH FOLLOWERS ELABORATE THEIR POSITIONS

REFERENCE: (A) SAIGON 7545; (B) SAIGON 7637

1. SUMMARY: MOST SAIGON DAILIES MAY 3 CARRIED THE FULL TEXT OR SUMMARIES OF DUONG VAN MINH' S MAY 1 STATEMENT. ONLY TWO PAPERS CARRIED THE FULL TEXT COMPLETE WITH REFERENCES TO RESTRICTIONS ON DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES AND RELEASE OF POLITICAL DETAINEES. GVN REBUTTAL OF THE MINH STATEMENT WAS ALSO COVERED. PRO- ADMINISTRATION PAPERS AND GVN RADIO AND TELEVISION IGNORED THE STATEMENT. GVN SPOKESMEN AND RADIO DISCREDITED ANY SO- CALLED " THIRD SEGMENT." MINH FOLLOWERS HAVE TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS THEY TOOK CONSIDERABLE PAINS TO DRAFT A STATEMENT WHICH WAS CONCILIATORY IN NATURE AND WHICH THREADED BETWEEN THE GVN AND PRG APRIL 25 PROPOSALS. END SUMMARY.
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2. MOST SAIGON DAILIES MAY 3 CARRIED THE FULL TEXT OR SUMMARIES OF DUONG VAN (" BIG") MINH' S MAY 1 STATEMENT. (ISSUANCE OF THE STATEMENT AFTER PAPERS' APRIL 30 DEADLINES AND THE MAY DAY HOLIDAY MEANT THAT MAY 3 EDITIONS WERE THE FIRST THAT COULD

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REPORT IT.) PRO- ADMINISTRATION PAPERS IGNORED THE STATEMENT ENTIRELY, HOWEVER, WHILE INDEPENDENTS REPORTED IT IN SUMMARY AND OPPOSITION JOURNALS CARRIED FAIRLY COMPLETE SUMMARIES OR THE FULL TEXT. MINH FOLLOWER HONG SON DONG' S DIEN TIN CARRIED THE FULL TEXT PLUS A SUMMARY CUM COMMENTARY. MOST PAPERS DELETED POINTS 3(B) AND (C), WHICH REFERRED TO IMPLEMENTATION OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES AND RELEASE OF POLITICAL DETAINEES (REF B). IN SOME CASES THESE POINTS WERE SIMPLY NOT TOUCHED UPON, WHILE IN OTHERS EDITORS CHOSE TO BLANK THEM OUT AT LAST MINUTE, EVIDENTLY FEARING THAT THEIR PAPERS MIGHT BE CONFISCATED. DIEN TIN AND MILDLY OPPOSITIONIST BUT THEP PRINTED AND/ OR REPORTED ALL POINTS WITHOUT INCIDENT.

3. MOST MAY 3 PAPERS ALSO REPORTED IN SUMMARY THE GVN' S REBUTTAL OF THE MINH PROPOSAL. A REPORT OF THE ENTIRE REBUTTAL STATEMENT APPEARED IN OFFICIAL VIET- NAM PRESS MAY 2 AFTERNOON EDITION. THE SPOKESMAN WAS REPORTED SAYING THAT THE PROPOSAL WAS NOT " NEW, CONCRETE (OR) REASONABLE:" NOT REASONABLE, BECAUSE " IT DID NOT TOUCH ON THE WITHDRAWAL OF NON- SOUTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS FROM SOUTH VIET- NAM;" NOT CONCRETE, " SINCE IT DID NOT SET FORTH A DEFINITE TIMETABLE TO HELP SOLVE THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS (OF THE SOUTH) IN A SHORT AND LOGICAL PERIOD OF TIME."

4. IN ANOTHER STATEMENT, OBVIOUSLY ADDRESSED TO THE MINH PROPOSAL' S CALL FOR A " TRULY AND WORTHILY" REPRESENTATIVE THIRD SEGMENT IN THE NCNRC, THE GVN SPOKESMAN STATED THAT " THE SO- CALLED THIRD SEGMENT DOES NOT EXIST IN SOUTH VIET- NAM." HE SAID, " THERE EXIST ONLY ELEMENTS EITHER OF THE COMMUNIST SIDE OR OF THE NATIONALIST SIDE." SAIGON RADIO COMMENTARY MAY 3 SIMILARY CONCLUDED THAT " NO SEGMENT CAN BE CALLED THE THIRD SEGMENT IN THE SOUTH, " AND THAT " IN THE SOUTH THERE ARE ONLY THE AGGRESSIVE COMMUNIST SEGMENT AND THE NATIONALIST SEGMENT WHICH IS FIGHTING AGAINST AGGRESSION." PRETENDERS TO THE THIRD SEGMENT ROLE WERE DESCRIBED AS THE EXPATRIATE VIETNAMESE AND WERE CONDEMNED AS " COWARDS," SELF- SEEKERS, AND PEOPLE OF " NO TALENT AND MERIT." (PARTIAL TEXT
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REPORTED FBIS S-030725.)

5. GVN RADIO AND TELEVISION DID NOT REPORT THE MINH PROPOSAL. NEWS AND COMMENTARY CONTINUED TO EMPHASIZE THE REASONABLENESS AND CONCRETENESS OF THE GVN' S APRIL 25 PROPOSAL, TO COMPARE IT FAVORABLY TO THE PRG' S COUNTERPROPOSAL, AND TO POINT OUT CONTINUED COMMUNIST CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS AS EVIDENCE OF COMMUNIST LACK OF GOOD WILL OR DESIRE FOR PEACE.

6. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS MAY 3 AND 4 MINH FOLLOWERS DEPUTIES HO VAN MINH, NGUYEN HUU CHUNG AND HO NGOC NHUAN HAVE STATED THAT THEY TOOK CONSIDERABLE PAINS TO DRAFT A STATEMENT WHICH WAS CONCILIATORY IN NATURE AND THREADED BETWEEN THE GVN AND PRG APRIL 25 PROPOSALS, WHICH HAD,

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PREDICTABLY, PROVED MUTUALLY UNACCEPTABLE. IN PLAYING THIS " HONEST XYMKER" ROLE, THEY WANTED TO AVOID DIRECT, POLARIZING REFERENCE TO THE NVA AND TO CALL FOR A " REAL" END TO RESTRICTIONS ON DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES IN THE SOUTH.

7. WITH RESPECT TO THE NVA, THEY EXPLAINED THAT ANY DIRECT REFERENCES TO THE NVA WOULD BRING A QUICK COMMUNIST REJECTION OF THE PROPOSAL; HENCE NO SUCH REFERENCES WERE MADE. IN ANY CASE, THEY FELT THAT EVEN IF THE NVA DID WITHDRAW ITS UNITS IT COULD STILL LEAVE ITS TROOPS BEHIND IN VC UNITS, WHICH WOULD ACCOMPLISH NOTHING. (DEPUTY HO NGOC NHUAN ADDED THAT HE AND SOME OTHER MINH SUPPORTERS DOUBT THAT THE COMMUNISTS WILL EMPLOY THE NVA IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE; THEY BELIEVE THE COMMUNISTS INTEND TO USE THE NVA AS A BARGAINING LEVER, TO COMPENSATE FOR THE NLF' S OBVIOUS LACK OF POLITICAL STRENGTH.) THE DRAFTERS OF THE MINH STATEMENT FINALLY DECIDED TO FOLLOW CLOSELY THE LANGUAGE AND STYLE OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT AS NEGOTIATED, AVOIDING SUCH REFERENCES AS " WITHDRAWAL OF NON-SOUTH VIETNAMESE FORCES."

8. MINH' OFFICIAL PRESS SPOKESMAN DEPUTY NGUYEN HUU CHUNG WENT ON TO POINT OUT THAT THE VIETNAMESE WORD USED FOR " DEMOBILIZATION" IN PARA 5(B)(B) OF THE STATEMENT (PHUC VIEN) ACTUALLY MEANS " TO LEAVE THE RANKS AND GO HOME OR GO BACK TO THE POINT OF ORIGINAL MOBILIZATION." THIS, HE EXPLAINED, IS A MUCH BROADER TERM THAN THE STANDARD TERM FOR DEMOBILIZA-TION (GIAI NGU), WHICH MEANS MERELY RELEASE FROM THE RANKS.
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THE USE OF THIS TERM WAS INTENDED TO COVER THE MATTER OF WITHDRAWING NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS. MINH, HE SAID, NEVER INTENDED THAT THEY STAY IN THE SOUTH; HE MADE THIS CLEAR IN HIS MARCH 15 LE MONDE AND NEW YORK TIMES INTERVIEWS.

9. WITH RESPECT TO RESTORING DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES, EMBASSY OFFICERS WERE TREATED TO ARTICULATE BUT FAMILIAR REVIEWS OF WHAT THE MINH CAMP CONSIDERS THE ADMINISTRATION' S UNDEMOCRATIC CHARACTER AND THIEU' S LACK OF SERIOUS INTEREST IN LETTING THE PEOPLE FREELY EXPRESS THEIR POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS. A CENTRAL THEME OF THESE REVIEWS WAS AN EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT THE REAL ISSUE IN DECIDING THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF THE SOUTH IS TO LIBERALIZE AND AND CLEAN UP THE CURRENT GVN AND GET IT READY TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH THE COMMUNISTS.

10. MINH SUPPORTERS WERE UNSURPRISED BY THE GVN' S RESPONSE TO THEIR PROPOSAL. THEY STATED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION " HAD" TO MAINTAIN ITS POSITION, AND COULD NOT CHANGE ITS DEMAND FOR AN NVA WITHDRAWAL OR ADMIT THAT UNDEMOCRATIC PRACTICES EXISTED IN THE RVN.

COMMENT: THIS LINE IS CONSISTENT WITH THE MINH FOLLOWERS' BELIEF THAT THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION IS LOCKED ON ITS PRESENT

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COURSE AND THAT THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE SOUTH CANNOT
CHANGE APPRECIABLE UNTIL THE ADMINISTRATION IS REPLACED.
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